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School Committee Minutes 01/27/2004

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2004
7:30 PM

Present: Suzanne Owayda, Chair
Paul Schlichtman, Vice Chair
Joani LaMachia, Secretary
Barbara Goodman
Sue Sheffler
Jeff Thielman
Martin Thrope

Superintendent: Kay Donovan
Asst. Supt.: Joanne Gurry
Sp. Ed. Director: Marilyn Bisbicos

Absent: CFO Rob Addelson

Call To Order: 7:40 pm

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Amy Cohen APS parent and coordinator of the Town wide PTO voiced frustration on the part of parents and students on the lack of progress in teacher contract negotiations and urged the School Committee to make some small steps/or progress in negotiations.

Massachusetts Association of School Committees

Outstanding Friends of Public Education Award

Glenn Koocher, Executive Director of MASC and Paul Schlichtman, President of MASC presented the Arlington Partners in Education Foundation with the **Outstanding Friends of Public Education Award**. The foundation raised an exceptional amount of money for APS, \$270,000.00 the size and scope of the generosity is unprecedented in Massachusetts.

COMMITTEE VOTES

Public Vote/ Superintendent's Contract

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was:

Voted to authorize approval of the contract agreement between the Arlington School Committee and Superintendent Donovan to

Extend Supt. Donovan's contract for one year to July 2005

Include the following salary increases:

4% retroactive to July 1, 2002

3% retroactive to July 1, 2003

3% effective July 1, 2004

Roll Call:

Ms. Goodman - yes

Ms. LaMachia- yes

Mr. Thielman - yes

Mr. Thrope - no

Ms. Sheffler - yes

Mr. Schlichtman - yes

Ms. Owayda - yes

Warrant Approval

On a motion by Ms. LaMachia and seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was unanimously
Voted to approve warrant # 04092 in the amount of \$523,859.27

CURRICULUM UPDATE

Asst. Supt. Joanne Gurry presented the curriculum update and the votes taken at the curriculum subcommittee on Monday,

January 12th Dr. Gurry gave a brief chronology of the No Prerequisites Policy, the proposed AHS Program of Studies (2004-2005), the AHS graduation requirements and the waiver for physical education for grade 10 students. The Committee discussed the no prerequisite issue at length. Ms. Sheffler requested that the record reflect her view on what we are calling the no prerequisite policy; she believes that it is not so much about prerequisites as it is the dynamic between teacher, parent, and students. The system in place does not allow time for teacher, parent, student, and guidance counselors to meet and discuss course selection. Also of concern is that expectations and skill levels are not clear to most parents, and that it is really allowing students to enter a course without the necessary skills. This forces the teacher to deal with a much wider range of skill levels. Ms. Sheffler emphasized that not insisting that teachers have more input on course recommendations is a big mistake. The Committee agreed that there needs to be a clear set of expectations put forward to students and parents on what is required prior to entering each level. The policy will move ahead. The success or failure of the policy has yet to be determined; the subcommittee will continue meeting to review timelines, action plans, hold teacher discussions and monitor student progress/data. Mr. Thrope pointed out that there might be a need to explore two different approaches; the transition from grade 8-9 may require a more stringent approach than grades 9-12. Ms. Goodman requested a listing of any classes with 15 students or less.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was unanimously Voted to reaffirm the AHS graduation requirements as proposed and outlined by AHS principal Steve Woodcock effective for the class of 2008.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman, seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was unanimously Voted approval of the 2004-2005 AHS Program of Studies with the recommended additions by Steve Woodcock. Mr. Thielman amended the motion seconded by Mr. Thrope by adding "With the understanding that the School Committee receive a report from the administration by June 1, 2004 indicating the progress the School Department has made on communication with students and parents on the prerequisite issue".

The Committee also requested information on course selection and the number of students who take courses with/without teacher recommendations

On a motion by Ms. Goodman, seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was unanimously: Voted to grant waivers in physical education for 10th grade students only on the condition that there is a scheduling issue. (Provided there are enough course selections and with no additional fiscal impact).

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of a hearing a grievance; subsequent to executive session the Committee will return to regular session to conduct business. Roll Call: Unanimous

Executive Session - Grievance Hearing 9:00 – 9:35 G02-28

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

.. **Policy & Procedures** – Mr. Thielman presented the following policies for Committee approval:

.. **Policy BDE School Committee Subcommittees**

Mr. Thielman brought forward Policy BDE –School Committee Subcommittees for a second reading and moved approval. Ms. Goodman was not in favor of the policy citing that initial policymaking should have broad input and that this policy would prevent that. Ms. Goodman also pointed out that an issue could be discussed at a subcommittee committee meeting without being addressed about at a meeting, without a notice in the newspaper, or without cameras, etc. She suggested adding into the policy that the public would be made aware of the agenda in a public way, not just a 48 hour posting notice at town hall. Ms. Goodman urged her colleagues not to vote for the policy emphasizing that major issues should be sufficiently communicated to the public via newspaper, camera, etc.

Mr. Schlichtman moved, seconded by Ms. Goodman to table the policy. 5-2 motion fails

Mr. Schlichtman then requested that the policy and procedures subcommittee go back and look at the issue of at what level does a new idea become sufficiently controversial that it should be brought before the full committee or when is it a routine matter that can be handled at the subcommittee level.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was Voted to approve Policy BDE School Committee Subcommittees 6-1 (Ms. Goodman – no)

.. **Policy DBJ Budget Transfer Authority:**

On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Moved approval of Policy DBJ with the language in paragraph as supported by the policy & procedures subcommittee.

Mr. Schlichtman moved with a second by Ms. LaMachia to amend the policy to include the language in paragraph six as voted by the budget subcommittee. 4-3 motion passes (Ms. Sheffler, Mr. Thielman, Mr. Thrope – no)

.. Voted to approve Policy DBJ Budget Transfer Authority with the amendment as proposed by the budget subcommittee in paragraph six. 6-1 (Ms. Owayda- no)

.. **Policy DGA Authorized Signatures**

On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted to approve Policy DGA Authorized Signatures 6-1 (Mr. Schlichtman – no)

.. **Policy DI Fiscal Accounting and Reporting**

On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously Voted to approve Policy DI Fiscal Accounting and Reporting

Mr. Thielman presented the votes taken at the subcommittee meeting to the full committee for approval:

School Bus Advertising

On a motion by Mr. Thielman, seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was unanimously:

Voted that the Superintendent not be directed to contract for school bus advertising, with the understanding that this decision is specific to school buses and not to advertising and related commercial activity in general.

Park & Recreation Commission Warrant Articles: Temporary Display of Advertising/Sponsorship

On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously

Voted that the School Committee support the Park & Recreation Commission's insertion of articles in the Town Meeting Warrant amending the Zoning Bylaws and the Town Bylaws to allow for the temporary display of advertising/sponsorship signs under an established set of rules and conditions at athletic fields

under the control of the Park & Recreation Commission and the School Committee. (Passed by the Policy & Procedures Subcommittee, January 20, 2004, 3-0)

Skateboarding on School Property

On a motion by Mr. Thielman, seconded by Mr. Thrope:

Moved that the School Committee direct the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee to investigate the issue of skateboarding on school property on a consistent town-wide basis, and determine what, if any policy recommendation should be developed for full School Committee review.

Mr. Schlichtman moved, seconded by Ms. Goodman to table the motion. 4-3 motion passes

(Ms. Goodman, Ms. LaMachia, Ms. Owayda, Mr. Schlichtman –yes; Ms. Sheffler, Mr. Thielman, Mr. Thrope – no)

On a motion by Ms. Goodman, seconded by Mr. Schlichtman

Moved to refer to policy & Procedures subcommittee the task of clarifying when and how issues generated at the subcommittee level are brought to the full committee and the public. 4-3 motion fails.

.. Budget - Mr. Schlichtman reviewed the minutes from the budget subcommittee meeting and discussed budget timetable:

1. Vote on a preliminary budget bottom line of \$32,467,152 for submission to the Finance Committee, full school committee, February 10. Detailed preliminary budget distributed to school committee.
2. Budget subcommittee meeting to question the detailed budget, Monday February 23, 7:15. This meeting is timed to follow an anticipated Budget and Revenue Task Force meeting.
3. The budget subcommittee will hold a budget workshop around March 15. The subcommittee will solicit written questions prior to this meeting, and will look at line items as they are questioned.
4. The budget subcommittee recommends the full school committee use about an hour to look at line item proposals considered by the budget subcommittee at the March 23 meeting.

BUDGET UPDATE

Supt. Donovan reported that the entire budget would be available with all line items at the February 10th meeting. To help keep the budget under control the Superintendent explained that any increases in energy costs would come from the revolving account, any increases in special education expenses would come out of the circuit breaker account to try to contain the budget in order to restore some positions eliminated last year.

Supt. Donovan reported that at the Budget & Revenue Task Force the legislators were present and told town officials to anticipate level funding in the Chapter 70 funds; a proposal by the Governor on SBAB funding would borrow money up front for approximately 100 schools which could if approved include money for the Dallin and Pierce Schools.

Ms. Owayda reported that the joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen on Saturday, January 31st might be postponed, but suggested that any questions for that meeting be sent to the School Committee Secretary. Ms. Owayda will update members on the status of the meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded it was unanimously

Voted to adjourn @ 11:00 pm

Submitted by

Karen Tassone

Committee Secretary